Former First Lady of Land Tells Story of Her Life

Mrs. William H. Taft Reveals Many Incidents of Interest to Women in "Recollections of Full Years"

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it was in my time. And yet there is serious talk of reducing the salary of the Governor-General. It seems a pity. This would place the office in a class with Ambassadorships, which nobody but rich men can accept. The present salary, with nice management and a not too ambitious programme, will just about cover expenses, but I feel sorry for the wife of the Governor who must try to do what is expected of her on less.

Eight thousand dollars a year, sufficient income though it may be when it is expected to accommodate itself to an ordinary eight thousand dollars a year standard of living, shrinks alarmingly when its recipient is expected to maintain on it the dignity of a Cabinet position. If we had not had some private resources I don't quite see how we could have managed. Fortunately for my husband, and more so for his successors in office, this figure was raised to twelve thousand before he left the War Department, and still there are complaints which I am amply able to appreciate.

We finally settled, on the first of October after my arrival at Washington, in a pleasant, old fashioned house on K street near Sixteenth. It was not the most elegantly equipped house available, but we preferred a little extra space to the more elaborate modern conveniences, so we took it.

We were spared one item of expense by having the use of the War Department carriage and its big Irish coachman, Quade. Quade was quite a character. He had been at one time in the artillery service and had occupied the position in which we found him through several administrations. He was never able to lose the habits and manners of an artillery man and Mr. Roosevelt used to say he never drove behind him without feeling as if he were on the caisson of a gun wagon going into action. He kept his horses in fine condition, though a trifle too fat perhaps, and he took great pride in the speed he could get out of them. He would swing around corners and dash past street cars and other vehicles in a way that was anything but soothing to sensitive nerves.

He used to feed Mr. Taft's private riding horse at the public expense, and Mr. Taft didn't approve of this. He thought he ought to include the pay for its keep in his personal accounts, and he told Quade so, asking him at the same time to have a bill made out so that he might settle it. Quade regarded him in utter disgust for a moment, then said:

"Well, Misther Secretary, what with the good an' plinty o' fodder we got in the stables, I guess ye can go on a-feedin' your horse here without the Government's a-worryin' anny."

I remember going one day to a reception at the house of Justice Harlan on the occasion of his twenty-fifth anniversary on the bench. President Roosevelt was already there and as we drove up we found the bicycle policemen surrounding the entrance waiting for him. Quade, with great friendliness but with an absolute lack of decorum, leaned over on the box and shouted to them as we passed:

"Ah, begorra! Ye'll be a-waitin' around fer my boss one o' these days!"

Faithful Quade lived to see his prophecy fulfilled, but not long afterward he lost his life at his post of duty in a shocking accident. He was driving the Department carriage for Secretary of War Dickinson's family; the pole broke, the horses became frightened and bolted. There were young children and a nurse in the carriage, so Quade bravely held on to the reins and finally succeeded in turning the horses into a fence. He saved the occupants of the carriage from injury, but he himself was thrown forward violently, falling in such a way as to break his neck.

It was not long after our return to Washington from the first trip to Panama before arrangements were completed for the tour of the big Congressional party which Mr. Taft "personally conducted" to the Philippines and back, and which was destined to be slightly overshadowed as a Congressional party by the personality of Miss Alice Roosevelt, who, under the chaperonage of Mr. Taft and Mrs. Newlands, made the trip just, as Kipling sings, "for to be'old and for to see."

Knowing that I should have an opportunity to go again to the Far East in two years to be present at the inauguration of the first Philippine Assembly I decided to remain behind this time. I did not think I would much enjoy this brief trip to the Orient with three children and decided that a quiet summer in England would be better for us all. So I took a cottage in Oxford for the summer and with my two younger children and one of my Cincinnati friends and her two children made various trips here and there and found myself most pleasantly entertained. It was an exceedingly quiet summer, unbroken save by the somewhat lurid accounts which we gathered from the British and European press of the progress of the Congressional party with Mr. Taft and Miss Alice Roosevelt in the East. One German paper went so far as to announce that Miss Roosevelt was undoubtedly engaged to be married to her father's War Secretary.

Now there is always bound to be a sadness about the end of an Administration, no matter how voluntarily the retiring President may leave office, no matter how welcome the new President and his family may be. Mrs. Roosevelt seemed depressed, not, I am sure, over the prospect of leaving the White House—Presidents' wives are always given plenty of time to prepare themselves for that event—but for other reasons which one easily could surmise. Her husband and son were about to start for a long and possibly dangerous trip into the jungles of Africa, and she was looking forward to a year of anxiety. She was leaving a full and busy life; she had occupied her high position for nearly eight years, during which she had made a host of friends, and a great number of them had called during the afternoon to say farewell and to express their deep regret at her departure. I knew all of these things, realized their depressing effect and sympathized with her deeply. The President and Mr. Taft, seconded by other guests, did their best with stories and conversation, made as general as possible, to lighten the occasion, but their efforts was not entirely successful.

As my husband had an engagement to attend a "smoker," which was being given to him at the New Willard Hotel by a large gathering of Yale men, the party broke up very early and as soon as the last of the guests had gone I went immediately to my rooms. We had been assigned to the suite in the southeast corner, known in the White House as the blue bedroom.

This blue bedroom gave me food for interesting reflection. Conspicuous, under the mantel against the side wall, I found on a bronze plate the following inscription, which I read as I struggled with my book: "In this room Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, whereby 4,000,000 slaves were given their freedom and slavery forever prohibited in these United States." It is only a state bedroom now, having been made so by the plans of the McKim restoration which was accomplished during the Roosevelt administration, but it was once Lincoln's Cabinet room, a room in which he lived through many terrible days during the civil war. It seemed strange to spend my first night in the White House surrounded by such ghosts.

The servants in the White House are paid the usual wages, from \$25 to \$50, and are no more and no less efficient than other good house workers in other homes. The entire White House staff is paid by the Government, the only private servants in our employ being a Filipino valet, who had been with Mr. Taft for a number of years, and my personal maid.

In fact all White House expenses are paid by the Government, except actual table supply bills, and Mr. Taft is fond of insisting upon his conviction that the country treats its President exceedingly well. He was the first President to receive a salary of \$75,000 a year, and when the subject of his nomination was uppermost in political discussions he did not hesitate to say that he thought this increase from \$50,000 was an absolute necessity. He did not expect to spend \$75,000 a year, but he knew by careful calculation and by a knowledge of President Roosevelt's expenditures that he would have to spend at least \$50,000 a year and he thought he had a citizen's right, even as President, to provide a small competence for his family, a thing which in his twenty years of poorly paid official service he had never had an opportunity to do. He was 50 years old, with two sons and a daughter in school and college, and, as Secretary of War at least, he had long been working for a wage which was insufficient. But the country really is good to its President. It does not make him rich by any means, but it enables him to banish the wolf a fair distance from his door if he is sensible enough to assist its generosity by the exercise of a mild form of prudence.

My first inspection of the White House on the evening of my husband's inauguration was casual, but the next day I assumed the management of the establishment in earnest and proceeded upon a thorough investigation, which resulted in some rather disquieting revelations.

Mrs. Roosevelt as the retiring mistress of the White House naturally would make no changes or purchases which might not meet with the approval of her successor, so I found the linen supply depleted, the table service inadequate through breakages, and other refurnishing necessary. There is a Government appropriation to meet the expense of such replenishments and repairs, and every President's wife is supposed to avail herself of any part of it she requires to fit the mansion for her own occupancy.

Perhaps nothing in the house is so expressive of the various personalities of its mistresses as the dinner services which each has contributed. For my part I was entirely satisfied with the quiet taste displayed by Mrs. Roosevelt and contented myself with filling up the different broken sets in her service to the number necessary for 100 covers.

To be stared at is not pleasant, because it keeps one self-conscious all the time, but one gets more or less used to it. And anyhow, I enjoyed a sort of freedom which Mr. Taft did not share in any way. While he would probably have been recognized instantly in any crowd anywhere, I found that in most places I could wander about unobserved, like any inconspicuous citizen. It was a valued privilege.

My daughter Helen likes to tell about an experience she had one day in Philadelphia. She was a student at Bryn Mawr College and she went in to Philadelphia to do some shopping. Among other things she had to get herself some shoes. At the shoe store she was waited on by a girl who was anything but intelligently attentive. She had tried Helen's patience considerably by suggesting in a certain nagging way that her superior knowledge of what was "being worn" deserved respect, and that Helen didn't know what she wanted anyhow.

Helen selected some shoes and decided to have them charged to me, and she thought what a satisfaction it was going to be to reveal her identity to the patronizing and offensive young person. The young person produced pad and pencil to make out the check.

"Please have them charged to Mrs. William Howard Taft," said Helen, with what, I am sure, was her loftiest air.

"Address?"

"Washington."

The salesgirl held her pencil poised over the pad and with the familiar expression of satisfaction over a sale accomplished, said pleasantly:

"D. C.?"

Lieut. Woodward and his wife, who assisted him in work of inventing new explosive.

Uncle Sam Has Safest and Most Powerful Explosive

Lieut. Woodward and His Wife Worked for Three Years in Harlem Flat Perfecting Trotol-gelatin

THE latest disaster to the British navy, the destruction of the battleship Bulwark, might not have happened had that ship's magazines contained instead of lyddite an explosive invented by an American, the formula for which is in the possession of the War Department at Washington. The explosive is trotol-gelatin. The inventor of it is Lieut. Harold Chase Woodward, commander of the dynamite squad of the Engineer Corps of the New York National Guard.

"If the Bulwark's magazines had contained trotol instead of lyddite," say men who are familiar with Lieut. Woodward's invention, "the British nation would not now be mourning the loss of over eight hundred sailors who were sent to death unwarned. The French battleship La Liberte would be carrying her colors to-day instead of lying under the waters of Toulon harbor if her magazines had contained trotol-gelatin instead of melinite. The Maine would be doing service as a fourth class man-of-war at this time if her magazines had contained trotol.

"Japan could have crushed Russia in a single campaign and with much less loss of life than her armies suffered if this newest of explosives had been available. Hundreds of soldiers who have been killed by premature explosions of 'hair trigger' powder and chemicals in this great world war might still be alive had the nations used an explosive as safe and as serviceable as trotol-gelatin. In fact, there would be no danger of the dreaded magazine explosions aboard warships and on land if the foreign war departments had in their possession a certain formula known only in this country."

The story of how Lieut. Woodward and his wife worked for three years in a Harlem flat perfecting an explosive which, in its finished form, took the name of trotol-gelatin; how they braved the dangers of laboratory experimentation with a combination of chemicals which could have blown them and their apartment to atoms had they injected a conflicting element; how they sacrificed friends and money in bringing their explosive to its perfected form, and how, finally, they handed it over to this Government when they were offered great sums by foreign Powers for the secret, all that is well known by this time.

But the most important part of the story, the value of the explosive itself, has passed practically unnoticed. The War Department, in a report issued a year ago, made mention of Lieut. Woodward's invention and said it promised to revolutionize the ordnance plans of the department. Since that time Lieut. Woodward and his dynamite squad of the New York National Guard, the only squad of its kind in the world, by the way, have experimented with trotol-gelatin at Fort Wadsworth, Van Cortlandt Park and other places, and reports on these experiments have been sent to Washington.

Naturally, they are kept secret and little is known regarding the actual safety and power of the explosive except what has come from Lieut. Woodward himself, and he does not say much about it, except that trotol-gelatin is the safest and the most powerful explosive known to military science. Major-Gen. John F. O'Ryan of the New York National Guard wrote to Lieut. Woodward telling him he had invented "an explosive superior in safety, stability and power to those used before for military demolitions." Other letters have been received by him from army men congratulating him on inventing an explosive which promised to do away with the present dangerous methods of handling powder, dynamite and delicately compounded chemicals.

Lieut. Woodward has proved that trotol-gelatin cannot freeze or sweat, and thus become dangerous like dynamite; that it is proof against weather conditions and shock; that one can hammer it without destroying its power or setting it off; that two teaspoonfuls of it can be placed four inches apart and one exploded without exploding the other, although the latter will be blown to pieces; that 80 per cent. dynamite, the strongest dynamite known, is only half the power of trotol-gelatin; that dynamite has to be wrapped or confined about the object of destruction while trotol-gelatin need only be stuck in crevices, and that it is the greatest shattering force yet discovered.

It can be moulded into sticks, for it is workable like putty, and a regulation rifle ball travelling at the rate of 2,760 feet a second can be shot through one of the sticks without discharging it. Fire does not explode it, and when a match is applied to a small quantity it burns in much the same manner as tar paper, giving off a black, pungent smoke.

These are all the facts concerning the new explosive which are available at present. The Government has been testing it for nearly a near now, but no information regarding the results has been forthcoming. Lieut. Woodward is at work trying to perfect the explosive for commercial purposes. It is so powerful as a shattering force in its present form as to be useless for commercial work.

The War Department has tried all the high explosives now used by foreign Governments, such as cordite, lyddite and melinite, but the danger attending upon these tricky forces has been too great to warrant their use. Germany has probably the greatest list of hair trigger explosives in existence. Her scientists have worked in the explosive research field for many years and in some instances noteworthy results have been obtained.

There is, however, no explosive so safe that will not go off under the shattering force of a torpedo.

"Of all the great and disastrous forces," says Lieut. Woodward, "the torpedo can do more damage and do it quicker and with greater finality than anything yet invented. There is no explosive that will not blow up when hit by a torpedo. Even trotol-gelatin will go off."

Lieut. Woodward is at once interested when he reads accounts of explosions. In nearly all cases he says: "I told you so, I told you so." He can well afford to make such comment, for he has tested all kinds of explosives and knows under what peculiar conditions they become dangerous. Cordite, for instance, is fairly safe while it is fresh, but when it is stored in a ship's magazine it deteriorates and becomes dangerous. It is derived mainly from picric acid and its compounds form explosive elements within themselves. The United States War Department once spent considerable time experimenting with cordite, but it was found too dangerous to be of service.

Every foreign Government of any importance has made offers to Lieut. Woodward for his explosive; in fact offers were made to him before he turned over the invention to the War Department. Through the secret channels of the international spy system foreign Powers were advised of his work and approached him. He turned a deaf ear to them.

"There is a certain pleasure in having done a thing well," said he the other day. "I have just read of the disaster which befel the Bulwark and every time something terrible like this happens I begin to realize the importance of my own explosive. I'm sure the War Department officials do, too. You see, if the Bulwark had trotol-gelatin in her magazines instead of a hair trigger explosive she would be flying her colors to-day. I'm pretty safe in saying that you'll never read of one of my ships blowing up like that."

Trotol-gelatin.

Flowing Water

"THERE is some power in the sight and sound of flowing water which calms the disordered human mind," said a physician who has had some success as an alienist. I remember I had charge of a case up in the Adirondacks once that drew my attention to this fact.

"We lived on the shore of a lake, my case and I. He was not very violent except in a nervous way. He could seldom keep still for a minute at a time during waking hours, but one day a heavy shower fell and I noticed that he immediately became quiet and sat watching the progress of that heavy shower. He sat on the porch and watched the surface of the lake.

"There seemed to be some strange fascination for him in the sight and sound of that continuous steady downpour. After it was over I noticed that he remained calm for some time before he relapsed into his nervous state.

"Putting two and two together I decided to try some more of this water cure. Of course, I could not produce a shower of rain every day, but there was a swift running brook near by, and this did very well as a substitute. I used to walk my case out to the brook and invariably he seemed to be fascinated and calmed by the rushing water. It was as if, by some invisible power, they were washing away the cobwebs of his brain.

"We kept up our visits to the brook day by day, and by the end of the summer my case was on the way to recovery."

FEEDING TRAVELLERS IN THE HOSPICE OF ST. BERNARD

Unusual photograph of dining room in the monastery in the Swiss Alps. At the right is seen a traveller having his frost bitten hands bandaged.